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SECURITY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS:  
A TIME FOR CHANGE

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN P. KLINE, JR., USMC

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**SECURITY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS:  
A TIME FOR CHANGE**

**AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT**

**by**

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# ABSTRACT

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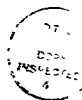
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# SECURITY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS: A TIME FOR CHANGE

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Since beginning the study of security assistance, I have observed that an understanding of the subject by my fellow officers is lacking. This, despite the fact that it is a very controversial element of daily discussions about national strategy and instruments of power. There is confusion about its substance, its purpose(s), and its administration. This paper is designed, in part, to provide basic information about the subject for the uninformed but interested military reader.

More importantly, the paper will discuss perceived problems with the system as they relate to its administration "in country." Even well-informed officers who have worked closely with, or as part of, the security assistance program express frustrations that warrant analysis. The extensive literature in the broad field of security assistance often addresses the topic from a macro level of foreign policy or economic impact. The subject of arms transfers has drawn commentary from almost every corner of the globe. However, the role of the military officer charged with implementation in the host country is often ignored or glossed over. This role, with its background, current status and future, is the focus of this study.

Before we can begin to look at the history of security assistance and related issues, we must have a working definition. The term is frequently used interchangeably with "military aid" or "military assistance," and is generally thought of in terms of weapons transfers, either as sales or as gifts. It has become "an 'umbrella' term" encompassing many facets of assistance to other nations.<sup>1</sup> Although it is generally associated with, if not equated to, the provision of military hardware, it is important for us to note that the "umbrella" also covers advice and training. At this time there are several programs integral to security assistance. There are five major Congressionally funded programs: the Foreign Military Sales Credit (FMSCR) Program, the Military Assistance Program (MAP), the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, the Economic Support Fund (ESF) and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO).<sup>2</sup> The first three of these form the military element of security assistance. The last of these, while involving military forces, does not necessarily include any U.S. forces. PKO is a means of contributing dollars to help finance multinational organizations such as the United Nations Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO). The Economic Support Fund is foreign aid (economic assistance) administered by the Agency for International Development.

Besides the funded U.S. security assistance shown above, there are additional unfunded elements. These



include Foreign Military Sales and Direct Commercial Sales, both of which involve some governmental management. Security assistance is clearly a complex concept involving many included programs and projects and requiring a vast bureaucracy to implement.

The "problems" and issues addressed are many and varied. I present them below, without substantiation at this point, to give the reader a sense of the paper's orientation.

The security assistance efforts are not an effective, integral part of a cohesive foreign policy in many countries. The programs are administered through diverse systems, and often do not work in harness with other United States supported or sponsored programs. The Chiefs of the Security Assistance Organizations are sometimes in competition with other military officers, principally the Defense Attaches, for access to, and influence with, the Ambassador.

The programs are administered, not so much by officers in the field, but by bureaucrats in Washington. Much of the focus is on military hardware; sales, gifts, or credits for purchasing. The role of trainer and, particularly, of advisor has been downgraded to the detriment of a cohesive, effective policy. The role of the CINCs is often unclear and, in some countries, downplayed by the Ambassador or an office in Washington. The ability to develop strategies for regions of the world is often frustrated. Congress has

imposed severe limitations on the authority and flexibility of Security Assistance Organizations, denying the Chiefs of these organizations any leverage with the host nations.

In order to more fully understand these perceived problems, we will examine the evolution of the program. Some knowledge of the historical path of security assistance and of the impact of legislation is critical to our analysis.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, The Management of Security Assistance, p. 1-6.
2. Larry A. Mortsoif and Louis J. Samelson, The Congress and U.S. Military Assistance, p. 3

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL AND LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Arms sales have been a part of international relations for thousands of years, and though their impact has varied, their presence has been pervasive. Our own independence was gained with military assistance from France (not a disinterested party) during the American Revolution.<sup>1</sup> During the American Civil War, efforts by the Confederacy to obtain assistance from the British were thwarted in part by the Union's naval blockade. In the first half of this century the United States was heavily involved in arms sales. Prior to its entry into World War I, America exported \$2.2 billion in war materials to Europe (and sold to both sides).<sup>2</sup> On the eve of its formal entry into World War II, the United States was already actively engaged in supplying the Allies through the Lend Lease Program.

The scope of American participation in military assistance was significantly broadened after World War II when President Truman formed the first security assistance organizations overseas: the Joint United States Military Advisory and Planning Group in Greece and its counterpart in Turkey. The United States was thus involved in what was to grow into a vast sea of Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAGs). These organizations were to assume a plethora of titles over the years, but the aims were

essentially the same for all--to help the host nation's military and to further U.S. interests.

Under President Eisenhower, assistance to allies and friends continued, expanding Truman's policy of containing Communist expansion.<sup>3</sup> President Kennedy again enlarged the role of "advisors" by encouraging more active participation in the field. This was evident in the escalating entanglement in Viet Nam. The specter of the growing involvement of U.S. advisors engaged in combat would come to have major influence on the American perception of MAAGs in their advisory role.

The Nixon Doctrine was largely a reaction to the disastrous war in Viet Nam. President Nixon planned to leave the fighting to the host nation while the U.S. provided economic assistance and military hardware to help. The idea was to keep U.S. troops from engaging in combat while trying to help friends and allies. Nevertheless, MAAGs continued in size and importance throughout the world, and the advisory role remained important.

During the Ford Administration, the Congress took an active role in formulating policy concerning MAAGs by passing the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976.<sup>4</sup> This was an expression of the concern over the proliferation of arms transfers and of the fear of involving U.S. field personnel in active roles. President Carter shared the concern over the proliferation of weapons, particularly to developing nations, and sought

to limit U.S. involvement in arms sales. He announced in 1979 that "arms transfers would henceforth be viewed as an exceptional foreign policy implement."<sup>5</sup> (emphasis in original)

President Reagan sought to reverse the declining role of security assistance. In expressing national security strategy, the President declared,

U.S. Low Intensity Conflict policy, therefore, recognizes that indirect--rather than direct--applications of U.S. military power are the most appropriate and cost effective ways to achieve national goals. The principal military instrument in Low Intensity Conflict, therefore, is security assistance.<sup>6</sup>

As indicated above, regardless of Presidential intent, the Congress has become increasingly involved in foreign policy, and particularly in security assistance policy. Because they play such an important role in many of the frustrations to be discussed in this paper, the actions of the Congress will be briefly outlined.

The dominating legislation regarding security assistance is contained in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended and in the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976 as amended. The latter act and its successors impact the management of security assistance by amending the former. The Arms Export Control Act (short title) first placed significant restrictions on the management of security assistance and reflected the intent of Congress to limit the authority and influence of U.S. military personnel abroad. This act was signed into

law only after President Ford vetoed its predecessor.<sup>7</sup> The veto was based on a number of grounds including questions as to the maintenance of the constitutional separation of powers. In its comment, the House Committee on International Relations called the new bill "a reform measure."<sup>8</sup> The Committee cited many reasons for the "reform"--the "Indochina war," the economy, balance-of-payments deficits, a lack of public support, and the belief that decisions regarding security assistance had been made "without the knowledge or concurrence of the Congress."<sup>9</sup>

The declared intent of Congress to eliminate MAAGs, and all other security assistance organizations, by 1 October 1977 naturally had a long lasting impact on their effective functioning. Except when specifically authorized to exist by Congress, MAAGs were to be replaced by "the assignment of up to three U.S. military personnel to each Chief of a U.S. Mission to perform security assistance functions."<sup>10</sup> The International Security Assistance Act of 1977 amended this restriction slightly by allowing an augmentation of the three Armed Forces personnel to "perform accounting and other management functions with respect to international security assistance programs...[with]...three additional members of the Armed Forces...when specifically requested by the Chief of the Diplomatic Mission."<sup>11</sup> The limitation to "perform accounting and other management functions" was enacted with the 1976 law and continued in this augmentation

allowance. It is important to note that Armed Forces personnel assigned to security assistance duties are, in all cases, to serve under the direction and supervision of the Ambassador or Chief of Mission; they are not an autonomous influence.

In 1981 there was a slight shift in emphasis. In its report, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations stated that the "bill also repeals or otherwise modifies several restrictions that have been previously placed on Presidential authority to provide foreign assistance."<sup>12</sup> The law, the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1981, retained the six man limitation on military personnel to manage security assistance programs in all but twelve countries specifically authorized larger organizations. It did remove the "three and three augment" encumbrance, however. In signing this legislation into law in January 1982, President Reagan recognized the restoration of "needed flexibility" to the foreign assistance program.<sup>13</sup>

Until this point (since 1976), it had been the clear intent of Congress to severely limit the role of military officers assigned to security assistance offices overseas. They were to perform logistic management functions, that is, assure the proper delivery of hardware the transfer (or sale) of which was arranged in Washington. They were specifically not to advise or train host country armed forces. Any necessary training would be performed by teams

temporarily assigned for that specific purpose (Mobile Training Teams, for example). They were also specifically prohibited from promoting arms sales (unless authorized by competent authority in the Executive Branch). Despite the new "flexibility", most of these restrictions remained. One important change in the wording did appear in 1981. One of the functions to be performed by the permanently assigned military forces was to be "evaluation and planning of the host government's military capabilities and requirements."<sup>14</sup> A liberal interpretation of this function permits some "advice" if not training.

There followed a period of essentially no legislation concerning security assistance organizations, just a series of continuing resolutions to keep the government running. The International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985 was the first such act passed since its predecessor of 1981. Even here there were no significant changes regarding the functioning of security assistance offices. Through 1986 the law still allowed "evaluation and planning" but insisted that "advising and training" would be performed by personnel temporarily assigned for the purpose.<sup>15</sup> There have been no other notable changes to the Foreign Assistance Act (regarding the management of security assistance) since.

Despite the extensive impact of Congressional involvement in the management of security assistance, a distinct shortage of critical analysis or comment exists in



the literature. This shortcoming was noted by Dr. Larry Mortsoff and Dr. Louis Samelson of the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management. They prepared an insightful and helpful paper in 1987 to "fill the void" and address the need for more understanding of Congressional impacts.<sup>16</sup> They succinctly summarize the legislative restrictions on the management of security assistance, and in addition to the limitations on the size of organizations, they list two other restrictions having noticeable impact on the scope of MAAG activities: the prohibition against any duty, including training, which might involve U.S. military forces in combat, and the prohibition against any assistance to police forces (with the exceptions of Honduras and El Salvador when the President specifically provides certification and waives the restriction. Also exempted are long time democracies which do not have standing armies and do not grossly violate internationally recognized human rights.)<sup>17</sup> Mortsoff and Samelson present an interesting argument that although it is generally recognized that the conduct of foreign policy belongs to the President, the Congress "possesses and exercises the basic constitutional power to authorize the military assistance grant and sales programs."<sup>18</sup> They maintain that the Congress delegates this function to the Executive Branch through legislation, specifically the Foreign Assistance Act and the Arms Export Control Acts discussed above. They underscore the basic frustration of many dealing in the complex world of security

assistance by noting, "Considering the behavioral dispositions of the two branches--with one usually for and the other sometimes for, unsure, or against military assistance--it is a wonder that we have any workable program at all."<sup>19</sup> [emphasis in original].

To begin to come to grips with the problems and frustrations inherent in the security assistance programs, we must briefly examine the organization for implementation. The State Department has overall statutory responsibility for administration of the program within the Executive Branch. Within the State Department the Undersecretary for Security Assistance, Science, and Technology is primarily responsible for security assistance. The Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs is also an instrumental part of the State Department's management effort as is the Chief of U.S. Diplomatic Mission (Ambassador). There are many departments and agencies involved in the management of security assistance, but the Department of Defense clearly has the largest commitment of manpower.<sup>20</sup> This Defense manpower can be found in numerous offices and agencies in Washington, on posts and stations throughout the United States and in countries around the world. Some of the principal participants include the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Policy), the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA), the Defense Intelligence

Agency (DIA), the Unified Commands (CINC's), Security Assistance Offices overseas, and Defense Attache Offices.

A detailed discussion of the roles and missions of all these departments and agencies is well beyond the scope of this paper. The relationships of those operating outside the United States are particularly germane to the discussion, however, and will be outlined here. The Chief of the Security Assistance Organization (e.g., Military Group Commander) is responsible to the Chief of the U.S. Diplomatic Mission (e.g., Ambassador). He is also responsible to the CINC in his region and to the Director, DSAA in the Pentagon. In many countries security assistance functions are performed by Defense Attache Offices. In these instances, the Defense Attache is responsible to the Chief of Mission and to the Director, DIA. The Attache must also communicate with the CINC and the DSAA but they are not in his "chain of command." Without really beginning to investigate the many participating organizations, we can still easily see that the management of security assistance, even from the limited vantage of the military officer in the field, is very complex. This complexity plays a significant role in the frustrations experienced by military officers struggling with implementation and management of policy "in country."

#### ENDNOTES

1. Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, The Management of Security Assistance, ch. 1. For an excellent discussion of the history of American security assistance, see chapter one of this work.
2. Ibid., p. 1-10.
3. Ibid., p. 1-16.
4. "International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976," in United States Code Congressional and Administrative News, 1976, Vol. 3, p. 1385.
5. DISAM, p. 1-21.
6. National Security Strategy of the United States, The White House, p. 33.
7. Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol. 12, No. 19, p. 830.
8. "International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976," U.S. Code, p. 1387.
9. Ibid., p. 1389.
10. Ibid., p. 1394.
11. "International Security Assistance Act of 1977," in United States Code Congressional and Administrative News, 1977, Vol. 1, p. 91 STAT 616.

12. "International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1981," in United States Code and Administrative News, 1981, Vol. 3, p. 2406.

13. Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol. 17, No. 53, p. 1424.

14. U.S. Congress, Joint, Committee on International Relations, Committee on Foreign Relations, Legislation on Foreign Relations Through 1981, p. 106.

15. U.S. Congress, Joint, Committee on International Relations, Committee on Foreign Relations, Legislation on Foreign Relations Through 1986, pp. 148-149.

16. Larry A. Mortsof and Louis J. Samelson, The Congress and U.S. Military Assistance, p. 1.

17. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

18. Ibid., p. 21.

19. Ibid., p. 23.

20. DISAM, ch. 5. This is a comprehensive discussion of the government organization for the administration of security assistance.

## CHAPTER III

### DISCUSSION

Security assistance has long been the subject of debate, and like other foreign assistance, it is a program without a domestic constituency. As discussed in the last chapter, it has ebbed and flowed as a major instrument of power. Its expense has been decried. Its usefulness has been questioned. Its motives have been suspect both at home and abroad. And yet, it has been touted as the foremost instrument of foreign policy. In 1981 Andrew Pierre (Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations) wrote, "Arms sales are far more than an economic occurrence, a military relationship, or an arms control challenge--arms sales are foreign policy writ large."<sup>1</sup> [emphasis in original]. Ernest Graves, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, recognized collective security as a cornerstone to U.S. defense strategy and noted, "Security assistance provides the added resources and the symbolic ties to make collective security work."<sup>2</sup> Gabriel Marcella observed, "One of the central justifications for the U.S. security assistance program is that it wins influence with recipient nations."<sup>3</sup> Whether this is true or even appropriate is certainly open to question, but that it exists as justification in the minds of some is clear. Stephanie Neumann, writing in 1986, concluded that despite the entry into the world wide arms market of many new salesmen, the

superpowers "have continued to dominate the arms trade, using military assistance both to enhance their position in the world and to limit each other's expansion."<sup>4</sup> That there are now many countries dealing in arms, not just as recipients of superpower largesse or as purchasers of superpower weapons, but as producers and sellers is undeniable. Most European countries, Israel, Brazil, and many others are in the arms business for profit. Where the United States has declined to sell, other producers have not hesitated to step in. It seems safe to conclude that security assistance (especially in the larger sense of arms trade) is an important component of international relations. And, if this is so, the issue becomes how best to manage it and how much to spend.

In addressing the question of how to manage the program, the issue of the extent of involvement of the overseas organizations rises to the top. The frustrations experienced by military officers assigned to U.S. missions abroad, both as Chiefs of Security Assistance Offices and as Defense Attaches are the impetus for this look at the problems and issues involved in the administration of security assistance.

What are, or have been, the "problems" with the role of the "MAAGs"<sup>5</sup> in security assistance? In 1974 Robert Pranger and Dale Tahtinen proposed several reasons for "evaluating and cutting the MAAGs" based on the premise that they encouraged arms sales, acting "as advocates of particular

kinds of military doctrine and equipment congenial to American forces (and U.S. defense contractors).<sup>6</sup> This explicit condemnation of U.S military personnel for pushing doctrine and sales of equipment for the benefit and profit of the United States is implicit in much of the concern over MAAGs. Paul Hammond et al expressed this Congressional concern thus,

...that military personnel in the field were generating demands for U.S. military equipment either by assisting representatives of the uniformed services or of U.S. commercial firms, or by actively promoting the acquisition of American defense equipment in their consultations with host military personnel. A fear existed that MAAGs, through these activities, were creating situations in which the policymakers in the Executive Branch and Congress were being presented with fait accompli (sic) concerning sales requests from foreign governments...<sup>7</sup>

Regardless of whether this salesmanship was well intentioned or malevolent, its adverse effects were noticed not only by members of Congress, but also by other military professionals, including some assigned to security assistance duties overseas. In this context the complaint would usually be that we were supplying equipment inconsistent with the needs of the host country, such as helicopters when what they really needed were trucks or jeeps.<sup>8</sup> The accusation here might very well be aimed, not just at MAAG personnel, but at the bureaucracy in Washington for selling or providing the "wrong" hardware since so much of the trading and all of the decisions are made there.

Another related concern or problem was that the MAAGs were too autonomous, often formulating policy independently



of the Department of State or even of the Department of Defense. Senior U.S. military officers had access to senior officials of the host nation that even the U.S. Ambassador did not have. This was particularly likely in those countries where the military effectively ran the government. This ability to influence the host nation was recognized in a non-pejorative sense by earlier researchers. Writing in 1973, Gary Guertner observed, "The opportunities for influencing the policies of recipient states are great since military missions and advisory groups are structured in such a way as to maximize access to high officials."<sup>9</sup> In 1967, John Bahm had concluded that "the more developed and powerful a state is, the less direct influence the Advisory Groups have within the country."<sup>10</sup> Acting on these beliefs and concerns, the Congress placed strict limitations on the size and activities of the MAAGs (as outlined in the last chapter). The emphasis for management of security assistance was shifted to the bureaucracy in Washington where it could be subjected to Congressional "oversight." There was a sense that the colonels in charge of the MAAGs were simply too powerful and were out of control.

Subsequent to the enactment of the major amending legislation in 1976 and 1977, the General Accounting Office published two reports critical of security assistance management with emphasis on shortcomings in the performance of the MAAGs. The thrust of the first of these, published in 1978, can be clearly seen in its title, Management of

Security Assistance Programs Overseas Needs to be

Improved.<sup>11</sup> The GAO recommended that as many tasks as possible be transferred from the MAAGs to either the host country or to the bureaucracy in Washington. Additionally, those tasks which must be performed by the MAAGs were to be clearly delineated by the Secretaries of State and Defense. Confusion over who was supposed to do what seemed to prevail, according to the GAO study.

The second report, Opportunities to Improve Decisionmaking and Oversight of Arms Sales, published in 1979, is a further condemnation of the clarity of guidance given to the overseas managers of security assistance.<sup>12</sup> In addressing the autonomy of the MAAGs, the report acknowledged that the Executive Branch had placed significant restraints on (though perhaps had not provided sufficient "guidance" to) in-country personnel by emphasizing that:

--Foreign interest in U.S. defense equipment was not to be encouraged in conversations or correspondence.

--Provision of information, including planning data, that might elicit or influence a foreign request to purchase significant combat equipment required approval by the executive branch.

--U.S. officials should not speculate about possible release of a particular system or take actions such as studies, briefings, or visits implying a positive decision without prior approval.

--All official or private foreign interest in significant combat equipment, including informal inquiries, were to be reported through Embassy communication channels.

--U.S. personnel should not facilitate sale of significant combat equipment by representatives of U.S. commercial firms overseas by giving advice on sales tactics, making appointments with the host government, or providing support indicative of U.S. Government endorsement.<sup>13</sup>

Even with this rather formidable list of restrictions, the GAO found that the U.S. was not restraining its sales of arms in accordance with President Carter's expressed desires and the intent of Congress. More Congressional oversight was needed.

Not surprisingly, perceptions of MAAG personnel differ markedly from the Congressional and GAO observations. Paul Hammond et al conducted interviews with MAAG personnel subsequent to the legislative restrictions and major reductions in personnel.<sup>14</sup> Frustration prevailed. While they often agreed with the GAO that there was uncertainty as to their "new" duties, they believed that the reduction in strength deprived them of the wherewithal to meet the demands placed upon them. The restrictions on discussing arms sales simply made them look foolish in the eyes of the host country military and often drove the potential buyers to other countries. Foreign suppliers were seen in-country filling the arms sales gap left by the U.S. The administrative burdens imposed on the reduced staffs were seen as so time consuming as to prevent the MAAG from having any time to "talk philosophy, strategy, and military tactics with their host counterparts."<sup>15</sup> Of course, critics would argue that this is exactly what was supposed to happen. Hammond concluded that there was a dangerous disparity

between the reduced capabilities of field personnel and the information requirements of decision makers in Washington. The MAAGs were a major source of information on the capabilities of the host nation military, and they provided extensive monitoring and feedback of the security assistance program. The reductions and restrictions effectively negated these capabilities. Hammond suggests, "If, as presently constituted and organized, they do not deserve the confidence necessary to make them effective, then it would seem advisable to alter their organization until they are able to command the confidence needed..."<sup>16</sup> We will return to this suggestion later in this paper.

A better understanding of staffing, organization, and functioning of more current Security Assistance Organizations is essential to this discussion. The 1986 edition of The Management of Security Assistance describes "three basic types of SAOs: those authorized more than six permanently assigned Armed Forces personnel, those which have three to six, and those DAOs (Defense Attache Offices) authorized to perform security assistance functions, and which may have personnel augmentations..."<sup>17</sup> The internal organization of the SAOs varies "according to size of the mission, country, objectives, working facilities and arrangements as well as the desires of the Chief [of the SAO]."<sup>18</sup> The number of military personnel assigned to security assistance duties in fiscal year 1986 ranged from zero, where the DAO was not authorized any augmentees, to 80

in the U.S. Military Training Mission in Saudi Arabia, and, in that same year, the organizations administering security assistance programs, the "MAAGs", operated with 21 different titles (SAO, DAO, MAAG, JUSMAAG, JUSMAG, MILGP, MLO, etc.).<sup>19</sup>

The Defense Attaches and the Defense Attache Offices, DAOs, have been mentioned several times in this paper. It is time to look more closely at their roles to see how they became involved in security assistance.

Military attaches have been part of the international diplomatic world since early in the last century. Military and naval officers were assigned or "attached" to a country's diplomatic mission, or embassy, to observe the host nation's armed forces and to report on their activities. The United States officially adopted the practice of assigning attaches in 1888 when Congress passed a law "authorizing the appointment of military and naval attaches to diplomatic missions abroad."<sup>20</sup> Almost from the beginning, service attaches became involved in arms sales. Alfred Vagts writes that at the turn of the century,

diplomats had to back up the service attaches, who acted as advance salesmen for the producers of explosives, warships, guns or rifles. In spite of indignant outcry about "merchants of death," the diplomats had become very much aware that foreign orders for such home industries strengthened their own country's war potential, that foreign sales in fact helped to keep these war industries on a stand-by basis.<sup>21</sup>  
(emphasis added)

While the United States still has service attaches, in 1965 the program was consolidated as the Defense Attache

System under the Defense Intelligence Agency. The DIA was itself established by Department of Defense (DOD) Directive S105.21 on 1 August 1961. Later versions of this directive charge the DIA to "direct, operate and support the Defense Attache System."<sup>22</sup> In providing the direction to the Defense Attaches, DIA assigns four basic roles. The attaches are 1) representatives of their service to their host nation counterpart, 2) collectors of information, 3) military advisors to the Ambassador, and 4) managers of the security assistance program when it is assigned to them. (As we have seen, all of these roles are also attributed to some extent to the officers assigned to MAAGs.)

Should the MAAGs have a significant role in formulating policy and managing the security assistance program? As we have seen, there has been extensive Congressional pressure to minimize the role of MAAGs and centralize management in Washington. The Department of Defense has also made efforts to centralize management with the formation of the Defense Security Assistance Agency as the central manager. But others have stressed the importance of the man on the scene as being influential and knowledgeable about the specific needs and concerns of the host nation. There is something of a consensus, expressed in myriads of ways from many diverse points of view, that the U.S. foreign policy lacks consistency and coherence. Recommended solutions for this inconsistency range from a return to 18th century isolationism to the exercise of power to change sovereign

states' governments. Commenting on this perception of a lack of a coherent policy, Ernest Graves gives importance to the MAAGs by noting, "The complementarity of the various assistance programs is more evident at the level of the U.S. missions to the recipient countries."<sup>23</sup> This is, in fact, where the most knowledgeable and coherent assessment should take place. The MAAG compiles an "Annual Integrated Assessment of Security Assistance" (AIASA) with the input of the other members of the "country team." The various counselors along with the Defense Attache and the Chief, SAO (if there is a SAO) comprise the country team headed by the Ambassador. This team is "on the scene" and has a feel for the immediate (and future) economic, political, social, and military situation in the country.

In theory, the AIASA should be the dominant factor in determining the extent of security assistance to be provided for a particular country. In fact, this may not be the case. Budget constraints, of course, may dictate another course of action despite the best intentions of the Washington bureaucracy to act in accordance with the AIASA. Budget constraints may not be the reason for deviating in many cases. Policymakers in Washington often believe they know better than the representatives in the field. They have "the big picture" unblinded by being too close to the action. Military officers assigned overseas, whether in SAOs or DAOs, naturally believe they are in a position to

know what will work in their country and are frustrated when their advice is ignored.

There is one aspect of security assistance directly involving the MAAGs which warrants special consideration in our discussion. In those countries where there is an active armed insurgency or an active conflict with another state, Low Intensity Conflict, the MAAGs feel especially constrained. An example is El Salvador which has been fighting an insurgency for years. As noted earlier, President Reagan has identified security assistance as the principal military instrument for U.S. involvement in Low Intensity Conflict. In order to effectively administer this instrument, MAAG Chiefs feel the need to remove constraints. The ban on permanently assigned personnel actively participating in training and the prohibition on allowing all U.S. military, even the Mobile Training Teams, from participating in combat operations have proven to be particularly frustrating.<sup>24</sup>

Another frustration is the conflict which sometimes exists between the Defense Attache and the MAAG Chief. As we have noted, the roles often overlap. For example, both have the mission of advising the Ambassador. Who is the principal advisor? Who has the best access to the Ambassador? Who has the best access to the host nation's military? Who best represents the interests of the CINCPAC? Who is the senior officer? Is seniority important? The answers to these questions vary by country and according to



the personalities involved. Does this conflict interfere with the effectiveness of the security assistance effort in country? I believe it does.

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2. Ernest Graves, "U.S. Security Assistance in the 1980s," Washington Quarterly, Winter 1984, p. 147.

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4. Stephanie G. Neuman, Military Assistance in Recent Wars: The Dominance of the Superpowers, p. 126.

5. Congressional Presentation for Security Assistance Programs, FY 1988, p. 357. In accordance with the prevalent practice in literature on the subject of security assistance, I have used MAAG as a generic term for the many titles applied to Security Assistance Organizations. This reference provides a comprehensive list of the titles in use in FY 1988.

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8. Interview with Lyman C. Duryea, COL, and others at the USAWC, Carlisle Bks, 1987, 1988.

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15. Ibid., p. 112.

16. Ibid., p. 116.

17. DISAM, The Management of Security Assistance, p. 25-2.

18. Ibid., p. 25-5.

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22. Department of Defense Directive 5105.21, 16 Dec. 1976, p. 3.

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## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Accepting that security assistance is important to U.S. foreign policy and that the Security Assistance Organizations in-country are an integral part of managing security assistance, we must consider how to get the most from those organizations. Numerous possibilities might suggest themselves: removing legislative restraints, increasing personnel strength, improving the training of personnel assigned, increasing (or decreasing) the rank of officers assigned, assigning more civilians, and probably many more. A recurring suggestion is to combine the efforts of military personnel assigned in-country into one organization. In 1971 Edwin Erickson and Herbert Vreeland cited a proposal to establish a "Defense Section of all military, including attaches" in the Embassy.<sup>1</sup> A major advantage of this proposal was recognized as giving the Ambassador a single point of contact for military matters, because "one of the most persistent difficulties the Ambassador experiences is dealing with the military."<sup>2</sup> This "persistent difficulty," identified over fifteen years ago, is certainly arguable and is obviously not universally experienced. However, that it has long been identified as a problem and that it is sometimes experienced is undeniable.

In January 1988 the U.S. Air Force formally submitted to the Secretary of Defense a proposal to merge SAOs and

DAOs under the direction of the Defense Attache.<sup>3</sup> This was done for a number of reasons, not all of which are germane to this discussion. We will examine the merits and demerits of the concept in relation to its effect on the functioning of security assistance management overseas.

In the supporting talking paper, the proponents put forth as the first favorable argument,

Competition among independent SAO and DAO "fiefdoms" can be all but eliminated by virtue of reporting to a common boss, the DATT (Defense Attache). This reinforces the age-old principle of unity of command. There will cease to be a question as to who is in charge of the military contingent at the Embassy. Designating the DATT as the undisputed military point of contact in the embassy will clarify authority to the host government and improve SAO/DAO responsiveness to the Ambassador and regional CINC.<sup>4</sup>

We will examine the elements of this argument in detail. Lesser included arguments such as the possibility of sharing common services and equipment--motor pools, typists, drivers, office supplies--are interesting but beyond the scope of this paper.

We saw earlier that there is sometimes friction between the MAAG Chief and the Defense Attache. This is obviously exacerbated when personalities clash, and largely eliminated when the individuals are highly compatible. A difficulty clearly exists when the MAAG Chief is markedly senior in rank to the Defense Attache such as in Turkey and Korea where the MAAG Chief is a general officer and the Defense Attache is a colonel. The attache sees himself as the Ambassador's principal military advisor and representative.

The general in charge of the MAAG also sees himself as a (if not the) principal advisor. The attache is often located physically closer to the Ambassador with an office in the Embassy, while the MAAG Chief may have his headquarters located closer to the host country's military headquarters. The Defense Attache can easily find himself in an awkward position trying to fulfill his responsibilities while deferring to his military superior (even though he is not in the "chain of command").

This raises the question, "Why not consolidate under the SAO, or whoever is senior?" As we saw earlier, the attaches have been on the diplomatic, international scene for over a hundred years, while MAAGs have only existed since 1947. Virtually all countries have attaches in their Diplomatic Missions abroad and receive attaches from around the world. The Security Assistance Organization is unique to the United States. Other countries still actively employ their attaches in arms transfers and the other activities associated with security assistance. Even the United States does not have Security Assistance Organizations everywhere, but with very few exceptions, all Diplomatic Missions have Defense Attaches. As relations and conditions change, the need for a Security Assistance Organization may disappear, but the requirement for attaches remains constant. It simply makes sense to place the Defense Attache as the senior military officer responsive to the Ambassador. There may be, of course, senior military officers assigned to

combatant commands deployed in the host country such as we find in Germany, Korea, and Panama. These are responsible to the cognizant CINC and do not come directly under the supervision of the Ambassador.

It would seem obvious that consolidating the functions under the DATT would conform to the "age-old principle of unity of command." However, this is only true if the DATT has both the responsibility and the authority to carry it out. He must really be in the chain of command with administrative and operational control of all military personnel assigned to either a SAO or DAO function. He must write the efficiency reports of the personnel under him. This implies that he must be senior in rank (at least by date of rank). There is an old axiom in military service that you can tell who you work for by seeing who writes your efficiency or fitness report--by who controls your promotability. Because the Services have very different efficiency report systems, this can be very complicated in this environment. We will consider a possible chain of command (and of efficiency reporting) later.

By "designating the DATT as the undisputed military point of contact" in the embassy and by assuring that he has the senior rank, the military authority within the embassy should, indeed, be clarified. Responsiveness to the Ambassador would almost surely be improved. Should the Ambassador, or other members of the country team, wish to speak to someone working directly on a security assistance

issue an appropriate briefing could be arranged by the DATT just as in any military organization where the decision maker wants to talk to the appropriate action officer.

Clarifying authority to the host government might not be quite as straight forward as within the embassy. The new system would have to be carefully coordinated with the host government to insure thorough understanding and to prevent any possible perceived "slight." Since other governments are already very familiar with Defense Attaches (they, after all, employ them in capitals worldwide), and since other countries do not use separate security assistance organizations, the consolidation should not be difficult to explain. The authority of the DATT should be readily accepted in a short time. However, this cannot be approached with a cavalier attitude. Each host country is different and requires a unique approach in explaining this change.

One of the benefits is to be improved "SAO/DAO responsiveness to the .... regional CINC." Having a single point of contact would, indeed, seem to facilitate this. However, this will only be true if the DATT is responsible to the CINC. That is, in keeping with our axiom, the CINC must have some say in the efficiency report of the DATT. That the CINC must have access to the consolidated office is clear. One of the stated purposes of the "Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986" is

to place clear responsibility on the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands



and ensure that the authority of those commanders is fully commensurate with that responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

Any action which might diminish the authority of the CINCs would clearly diverge from the intent of Congress.

If, as we postulate, this consolidation proposal would eliminate friction between the SAO and the DAO, improve responsiveness to the Ambassador, the CINC, and the host government and thereby improve the effectiveness of the organization and of the security assistance program overall, why not implement the change immediately? Besides the personnel movements and the changes to directives (including some legislative changes) which dictate a phasing in of the plan, there are arguments against the consolidation. The first and most pervasive, if not most persuasive, of these is that the principal function of Defense Attaches (collecting information or intelligence) is incompatible with that of SAOs (providing assistance). The argument is that host nation military officers will be reluctant to deal with the DATT, because they know that one of his functions is to gather military intelligence. This will impair the ready access now enjoyed by the Chiefs of SAOs. Since other nations do not have security assistance organizations and use their attaches for security assistance functions, one has to wonder whether this distinction between the DATT as an intelligence officer and the Chief, SAO as a helper is not seen through our own institutional biases and not through the eyes of the host nation's military. The debate on this question could no doubt rage back and forth with one

side pointing to an example of a SAO Chief with better access than the DATT in that country, and the other side identifying a DATT with better access (because of rank, perceived status, language ability, personality, prior friendship, etc.).

Another argument against consolidation has to do with the chain of command issue mentioned earlier. In keeping with the intent of Congress to grant responsibility and authority to the CINCs, the consolidated office must be fully responsive to the CINC, as the SAO is now. The Defense Intelligence Agency argues that this will eliminate (or reduce) its control over the Defense Attaches.<sup>6</sup> (Currently, the DIA controls the efficiency reports of the DATTs.) The result of this shift in control from the DIA to the CINC will be a loss of responsiveness, on the part of the attache, to the national level intelligence needs. The argument here is that the DIA is tasked with providing intelligence to the National Command Authority, specifically the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Regardless of the specific recipient, the point is that this is integrated, national level intelligence. Why DIA could not continue to provide this service is not clear. Reports from the attaches would continue to be sent to DIA as well as to the CINCs. If there is a serious conflict in tasking where the National Command Authority wants information that the CINC has placed on a lower priority, I am certain that the CINC would

understand that he, too, works for the National Command Authority.

There is another potential problem with the CINC -- one of perspective or of perceived pressures. In the current arrangement, the DATT feels free to "objectively" report issues to DIA regardless of the CINC's views. The Chief, SAO is under some pressure from the CINC to show improvement in the host nation's defense posture (state of training, quality of equipment, readiness, etc.). If the DATT were made responsible (to the CINC) for this kind of progress, he might feel pressure to report improvements rather than admit to continuing problems. Under this scenario, intelligence reporting would suffer. It is also true, in this scenario, that security assistance would suffer if dishonest reports were submitted as to the effectiveness of current efforts. This strikes at professionalism and integrity. If individual officers (CINCs, DATTs, or Chiefs, SAO) lack these qualities, the system as it exists, or as it is proposed to be, will not work.

Another look at the Goldwater-Nichols Act will shed some light on the intent of Congress regarding this consolidation and the relationship with the CINCs. The law directs a "Reassessment of Defense Agencies and DOD Field Activities."<sup>7</sup> It directs a study to

analyze methods to improve the performance and responsiveness of Defense Agencies and Department of Defense Field Activities with respect to the entities to which they provide supplies and

services, particularly with regard to the unified and specified combatant commands. [It directs that studies consider)...alternative allocations of authority and functions assigned to the Defense Agencies...including--(A) various possible re-distributions of responsibilities among those agencies...; (B) transfer of the responsibility for those functions to--...(iv) the commanders of unified or specified combatant commands... (D) consolidation of two or more such agencies and activities...<sup>8</sup>

It is difficult to miss the Congressional intent in the above edited extract. The Congress wants to give more authority to the "unified or specified combatant commands", the CINCs. Congress also clearly intends for the Department of Defense to seriously study consolidating agencies and activities, looking for greater efficiency and effectiveness. To ignore this directive is folly.

The "mechanics" of consolidation are necessarily complex, but not prohibitive. Some steps are quite simple, such as providing security assistance training for the Defense Attache (this is already done where the DATT has security assistance responsibilities), while others require changes in legislation to clarify funding sources and authority (SAOs are provided funds taken from the proceeds of Foreign Military Sales; DAOs are not). Some issues such as the efficiency reporting "chain" are complex and involve many diverse, parochial views. What should this efficiency reporting chain be? The details of the chain require study and input by all the Services (because each Service has a different system), but, in general, the DATT would report on the officers under him, and the Ambassador would report on

the DATT. The CINC would be the first military "endorser" of the DATT's report. Although these and other issues are, indeed, complex, they generally fall within the authority of the Secretary of Defense to decide.

In this brief study we have looked at the problems and frustrations associated with the management of security assistance programs overseas. The lack of a coherent, integrated country policy, the many Congressional restrictions on military officers in the MAAGs, the friction between MAAG Chiefs and Defense Attaches, the Washington bureaucracy, the Congressional move to enhance the CINC's authority, and others. Some of these "problems" are in the eye of the beholder. One man's problem is another man's solution (the MAAG Chief is restrained from advising and training to the delight of the Congressman who believes the MAAG Chief has too much latitude and ought to be restricted to administrative and logistics management duties). As we noted earlier, Paul Hammond suggested that if MAAGs did not deserve the necessary latitude to do the job, their organization should be changed until they were "able to command the confidence needed."

In view of the potential to improve the effectiveness of the country team and the security assistance program, of the potential to allow the officers in the field "to command the confidence needed," the consolidation proposal merits serious study. Study, not to avoid change, but to smoothly and professionally implement change. It is time to take

need of Congressional intent, analyze the needs of U.S. national security strategy as it relates to security assistance, and take action. Congress has demonstrated that when we bog down in bureaucratic, parochial quagmires it is not reluctant to dictate change. We have the ability to solve this on our own initiative. Let's do it.

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